

## THE SANITARY SITUATION IN TORONTO.

THE public health in Toronto is regarded as being rather bad. There have been reported 770 cases of enteric or typhoid fever with more than 80 deaths during the ten months ending with October last. It must be remembered, too, that this disease usually selects as its victims men and women in the prime of life. According to the daily papers, causes of disease prevail on every hand:—privy pits, foul lanes and yards, decomposing pavements, defective drains and plumbing, with doubtless the universal want, there as well as every where, of good ventilation of dwellings, shops, schools, &c., and, perhaps worst of all, a water supply far from being above suspicion.

The Queen city is now without a medical officer. Valuable time has been lost in the method adopted for obtaining one. Little or nothing—nothing at all special—is being done to improve the public health. Meantime the city is acquiring an unenviable reputation.

It was regarded as a wise act to ask for a special committee of the medical profession of the city to assist the authorities in the selection of a suitable medical officer; but it was thought that this committee were desired simply to confer with and advise the authorities in this selection, not to be thus constituted an examining body. It should not have been expected that any thoroughly competent, experienced, first-class medical man of proper spirit and dignity, who had worked hard to make himself master of his profession, and knowing that he had become master of it so far as present knowledge permits (for a first-class sanitarian should be first of all a first-class physician) and then too had attained the mastership of that science and art which would fit him for the position of medical and sanitary head of Toronto, would submit to the course marked out by the city authorities:—answer an advertisement among the “wanted,” apply for the (at present rather undesirable) position, and “go up,” with perhaps his University degree, and more, in his pocket, to be “passed” or “rejected,” and by—whom?

His fellow practitioners! First-class practitioners of course, but *who* constituted them examiners of their peers, and in a branch of the profession in which they probably do not lay claim to be specialists or experts? The wonder is, that a few physicians in good standing did submit to the “course,” and as rumor gives it, submit themselves to rejection.

A leading local “Daily” suggests that the city authorities begin again. This we too would respectfully advise. Make the position more attractive to a first-class physician and sanitarian: first by providing a fairly remunerative salary upon which he could subsist without penury or want; and second by some sort of assurance that he would not be obstructed but rather aided in his efforts towards sanitary progress.

A medical officer for Toronto, or for any municipality, we contend, should be decidedly of an aggressive character in relation to causes of disease, and he should receive every encouragement in removing the causes which he proposes to attack. Besides, we may add, he should be a thoroughly alive, energetic, vigilant and, above all, a practical man.

Further, we would also suggest that a commission be appointed to enquire into and endeavor to learn what special exciting cause or causes have given rise to the recent great increase in the number of cases of typhoid fever. An able commission duly considering the environments and conditions of all possible cases which have occurred within the last few months would probably be able to learn of some special cause common to all of them, which would assist greatly in the application of preventive measures.

Without some such investigation, the cause can only be conjectured or guessed at. There may be a plurality concerned in it. But the privy pits, bad as they are, are not so numerous now in the city as they have been; nor is it likely the drainage and plumbing are worse. Good wooden pavements are better than the deep mix-